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STATE OF MONTANA
DIVISION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
275 West Front Street, Missoula, MT 59802 (406) 728-4970

Ronald L. Rivers, M.D.
State Medical Examiner

Arnold B. Melnikoff
Laboratory Bureau Chief

Dawn M. Kangas
Administrative Assistant

SHELVED WITH PERIODICALS

AUGUST 1982

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

JUN 9 - 1983

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
1515 E. 6th AVE.
HELENA, MONTANA 59620

HIGH CALIBRE TURNOUT

Coroners, sheriff-coroners and county attorneys attended and participated in the Scobey and Glendive seminars. The community as well as the participants benefit from this expertise. They should be highly commended for their interest in medico-legal death investigations. These seminars are especially orientated toward the coroner. Any attorney involved in criminal or civil death litigations will find the seminars timely and informative. Since these courses are not open to coroners and attorneys at the MLEA they should attend when they are in their region.

GREYHOUND GOOFS

Parcels delivered through Greyhound Bus are categorized alphabetically, so we usually ask for Division of Forensic Science or Crime Lab packages. But if it is sent to a person it may be filed under ten different names and missed. So please address to DIVISION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE, 275 WEST FRONT STREET, MISSOULA, MONTANA 59802

HEAT STROKE OR ACCIDENTAL HYPERTHERMIA

The only way to confirm a death from heat stroke is to record the rectal temperature at the scene as soon as possible after death. This may be your only scientific fact in ruling the death accidental.

ONE YEAR OLD

This is the start of the second year for the Medical Examiner's Newsletter. I hope it has been helpful, but comments have been few and far between. Anything favorable may be directed to my bosses - your legislators!

ON CALL SCHEDULE - MONTANA STATE MEDICAL EXAMINER

AUGUST 1982

275 W. Front Street
Missoula, Montana 59802

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 RON RIVERS	2	3	4	5	6	7 JOHN PFAFF
8 JOHN PFAFF	9	10	11	12	13	14 RON RIVERS
15 RON RIVERS	16	17	18	19	20	21 JOHN PFAFF
22 JOHN PFAFF	23	24	25	26	27	28 RON RIVERS
29 RON RIVERS	20	31				

Telephone Numbers: State Office - 728-4970
WATS Line - 243-5796

Home Phone: Dr. Ron Rivers- 728-2033 (Home)
(week nights call unless otherwise indicated)

Dr. John Pfaff - Great Falls
Hospital - 727-3333
Home - 727-3905

Dr. Ken Mueller- Billings
Hospital - 657-7000
Home - 248-3024

AUGUST 1982
AIRCRAFT FATALITIES
R. L. RIVERS, M.D.

A seven passenger unidentified aircraft exploded into flames after crashing into a mountain near the continental divide.

The impact scattered pieces of bodies and wreckage over a wide area. Some partially burned bales of marihuana and dozens of hundred dollar bills were also noted with the wreckage.

The marihuana, money, jewelry, wallets and pocket contents were removed from the bodies and placed into evidence bags. The body parts were put into four body bags and sent to the funeral home.

QUESTIONS:

1) What serious error was made in the evidence collection?

2) Should autopsies be done?

AUGUST 1982
AIRCRAFT FATALITIES
R. L. RIVERS, M.D.

ANSWERS:

1. Proper identification of the dead is the primary concern in airplane fatalities. Massive dismemberment and charring of bodies makes positive I.D. extremely difficult. Fingerprints are usually gone and dental identification may be impossible without a lead to the identity. Removing jewelry, keys and wallets from the bodies may cause a mix-up. Extensive photography and charting of body parts on a map should be made. Small stakes or flags are useful in this regard. Collection of body parts should be made under the supervision of the coroner or medical examiner.

2. The National Transportation Safety Board and Federal Aviation Administration requests autopsies on all pilots. A toxicology kit is available. Often civil suits arise in these accidents so a complete autopsy with positive identification is necessary. When injuries are difficult to interpret as in any charred victim, X-rays are mandatory ---- especially when a criminal element is involved. The passengers should also be autopsied for their identification and elimination of foul play.